United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

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at work for you

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content

introduction 1
cleaning our air 3
cleaning our water 7
enforcing the law 8
working together for healthy communities 11
eliminating toxics 12
science works for environmental justice 15
funding for communities 18
tools & resources 23
websites & contacts 28

Community education and involvement is key to creating cleaner, healthier neighborhoods.

" We must take special pains to connect with those who have been historically underrepresented in EPA decision making, including the disenfranchised in our cities and rural areas, communities of color, native Americans, people disproportionately impacted by pollution, and small businesses, cities and towns working to meet their environmental responsibilities. Like all Americans, they deserve an EPA with an open mind, a big heart and a willingness to listen ."

-- EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson

introduction

All residents of New England are entitled to clean air, land and water in their homes, schools, offices and outdoor environments. The US Environmental Protection Agency works to protect all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, the burden of pollution and environmental degradation and to involve all citizens in making decisions that affect the environment in which they live, work and play.

Minority and low-income communities are often disproportionately exposed to the impacts of pollution. EPA New England's Environmental Justice program is designed to protect these communities by eliminating and preventing the impacts of pollution from factories, bus depots and other sources.

Our goals at EPA range from cleaning the air and water to making better use of our region's land and buildings, whether these properties are vacant and contaminated or filled with toxic chemicals. These efforts help reduce the rates of lead poisoning and asthma in New England and create healthier and safer communities for all New England residents.

The stories in this brochure highlight ways EPA has already improved the environment and public health by working with communities and local, state and federal agencies. Through joint efforts, EPA New England is ensuring the region's communities take a stronger role in the future of their environment and create a healthier New England. The brochure also provides information about EPA's funding sources and technical and program assistance.

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson visits New Bedford, Mass.

Community representatives with Lisa Jackson at EPA's cleanup facility in New Bedford.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has made it clear since the day she stepped into her job that "environmental protection is about human protection." While she was in New Bedford, she announced EPA was giving between $25 and $35 million to the cleanup of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site.

This money, from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will provide a tremendous boost to the cleanup of New Bedford Harbor and is expected to significantly speed progress made on removing PCB-contaminated sediment and return a clean harbor back to the community – one of the poorest in New England.

New Bedford is among the dozens of urban communities across New England receiving support from the $460 million channeled into this region from the Recovery Act.

Before making the announcement in New Bedford, Jackson sat with community members to hear their concerns and make sure they have a voice at the table as we move forward on the cleanup. Jackson's meeting exemplified how strong Jackson feels about EPA being a "listening ear" to all communities – and especially disadvantaged communities.

Congress appropriated a total of $600 million in Recovery Act funds to EPA's Superfund program to clean some of the most contaminated waste sites in the country. Many of these sites, like New Bedford, are in the industrial areas hardest hit by the recession.

According to Jackson, environmental justice "is not an issue we can afford to relegate to the margins. It has to be part of our thinking in every decision we make."

cleaning our air

Schools in Hamden, Conn., reported a 50 percent decline in asthma-related visits to the nurse a year after the district began using EPA's Tools for Schools indoor air quality program.

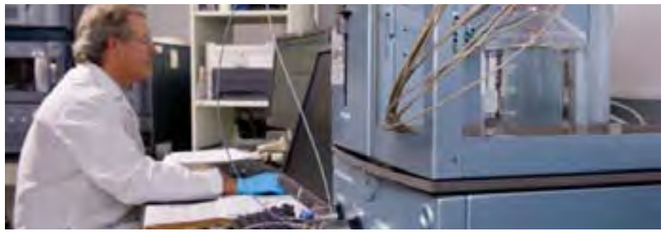
Asthma is a serious, sometimes life-threatening respiratory disease that affects the quality of life for millions of Americans. The air we breathe can be contaminated with harmful pollutants from factories, power plants, motor vehicles, cleaning products and many other sources. EPA New England's work to reduce air toxics helps reduce asthma and is part of the agency's larger commitment to protecting the environment and public health.

Tools for Schools Indoor Air Quality program

Schools in Hamden, Conn., reported a 50 percent decline in asthma-related visits to the nurse a year after the district began using EPA's Tools for Schools indoor air quality program. Hartford, Conn. reported a 21 percent drop in asthma-related visits to the nurse. These school systems are representative of urban New England school systems. More than 1,300 schools in the region now use Tools for Schools. About 25 percent of these school districts are urban and another 25 percent are rural, areas more likely to shoulder an unfair burden of environmental problems. Connecticut is the national leader in using Tools for Schools, with more than 900 schools using the program. New Hampshire is following Connecticut's lead by forming a statewide Tools for Schools network.

Cleaner school buses in Connecticut

More than 80 school buses in Mansfield and Newtown, Conn. were retrofitted with advanced pollution control technologies using 2007 Clean School Bus USA funding. In addition, 25 school buses in Hamden, Conn. were retrofitted through this program, which was launched in 2003 and has awarded more than 15 grants across New England for diesel retrofits, vehicle replacements and the use of cleaner diesel fuel in school buses. Other states also received Clean School Bus funding. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has retrofit school buses with idle reduction technology and advanced pollution control technology.



EPA scientist from Chelmsford Laboratory uses data to help understand environmental health issues.

Diesel retrofits at RI Airport Corp.

Diesel-powered equipment operated by the RI Airport Corporation will be retrofitted using part of the nearly $200,000 awarded to the RI Department of Environmental Management through the State Clean Diesel program. EPA allocated approximately $1.5 million in 2008 to the six New England states for State Clean Diesel projects. The Airport Corp. project will protect air quality and human health in this state, where asthma rates in children are estimated at 13.9 percent.

The Chittenden Solid Waste District

The Chittenden Solid Waste District is replacing three older diesel waste haulers with new compressed natural gas models, thanks to more than $200,000 provided by the Northeast Diesel Collaborative. The collaborative also gave $50,000 to the Conn. Department of Environmental Protection to retrofit maintenance vehicles in the state fleet. The city of New Haven, Conn., received nearly $115,000 in 2007 from the Northeast Diesel Collaborative, to install advanced pollution control technology on construction equipment operating at a school construction site.

Fighting asthma in Springfield, Mass.

More than 40 health workers in Springfield, where schools report a 20 percent asthma rate among students, were trained to help residents reduce environmental asthma triggers in their home and childcare providers to reduce triggers in their facilities. EPA and the state Department of Public Health are supporting this effort by the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition, a community group founded to fight asthma. EPA is also working with Springfield schools to improve indoor air quality and to reduce school bus idling. EPA's Asthma Team has adopted similar approaches for fighting asthma in communities in New England with high asthma rates. Another Springfield project is aimed at reducing health hazards and risks from pesticides for families living in public housing. The "What's Bugging You?" project, created by the Spanish American Union with $20,000 from EPA's EJ Small Grants Program, will help residents reduce exposure to pesticides, encourages safe ways to control insects and reduces asthma triggers for families most at risk.

Projects reduce diesel pollution

Since 2002, more than 11,000 diesel engines operating in New England have been, or are being, replaced with cleaner models or equipped with advanced pollution control technology. This is a huge step for a healthier New England since exhaust from diesel engines contains significant levels of small particles, or particulate matter. In fact, these engines create the third largest human-made source of fine particles. Fine particles in the air are a serious public health problem. They pose a significant health risk because they can pass through the nose and throat and lodge themselves in the lungs.

EPA has taken steps to ensure tomorrow's diesel engines are much cleaner than those operating, but existing diesel engines may be used for years to come, posing potential health risks. As a result, EPA is promoting strategies to reduce pollution from existing fleets, including switching to cleaner fuels; retrofitting engines with advanced pollution control technologies and encouraging idle controls. EPA also supports replacing or repowering old engines with new, cleaner engines. EPA's New England office works with community groups, schools, transit agencies, shuttle bus companies and others that operate in urban and potential environmental justice areas to promote strategies for reducing diesel emissions.

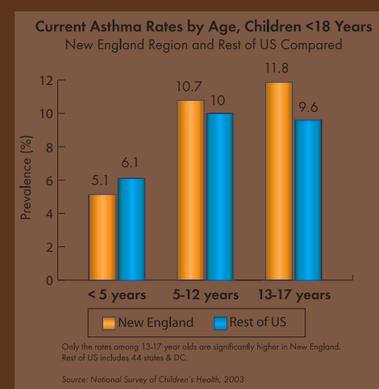
In 2008, the Northeast Diesel Collaborative (NEDC) awarded $2 million to projects in New England that will reduce diesel emissions and improve public health across the region. The collaborative works to reduce diesel emissions through pilot projects, laws, voluntary measures and mandatory programs. The collaborative is made up of representatives from EPA New England and Region 2 offices, the state air agencies of the eight northeastern states, and the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), a regional non-profit clean air association.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has allocated more than $10 million to the six New England states for Clean Diesel Projects that reduce harmful diesel emissions, maximize job creation, and promote economic recovery through a variety of diesel emissions reduction strategies.

Construction equipment and school buses are retrofitted with cleaner engines to reduce pollution.

New England faces challenge of high asthma rate

New England has the highest rate of adult asthma in the nation – 9.7 percent compared to 7.1 percent nationally. Of the seven states with the highest rates of adult asthma in the country, five of them are in New England where nearly a million adults are reported with asthma and 14 percent of children have suffered from asthma in their lifetime. These figures were reported by the Asthma Regional Council, a coalition of health, housing, education, and environmental organizations co-founded by EPA New England to reduce the impact of asthma across New England.



The Asthma Regional Council works to address the environmental factors that contribute to asthma. Indoors, tobacco smoke, dust mites, pest and pet allergens can exacerbate asthma symptoms. Outdoors, fine particles or soot have been associated with respiratory problems. The group has focused on homes and schools and the disproportionate impact of asthma on populations at greatest risk.

Within New England, Black and Hispanic communities had higher than average rates of asthma, according to the report. Children exposed to environmental tobacco smoke had higher asthma rates, as did people of lower incomes, the report found.

The rate of asthma among people living below poverty level was 15.6 percent, compared to 7.6 percent among people earning three times the poverty level.

Children in urban areas are particularly at risk for asthma. For example, the heaviest burden of asthma hospitalization is borne by children under 5, according to the Boston Public Health Commission. In 2004, the youngest Boston children had 7.7 hospitalizations per 1,000 population, which is more than 3 times the rate for Boston overall, the commission reported.

Working with the Asthma Regional Council, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire have signed anti-idling agreements with school transportation associations. Rhode Island has put in place a clean green school bus awareness program and is developing anti-idling legislation. Vermont has a newsletter for superintendents on school bus idling.

Nationally, asthma is responsible for more than $12.7 billion a year in health care costs and lost productivity. It is also the leading cause of missed school days. Each year, this disease is responsible for 10.1 million lost school days; 15 million missed or lost work days; 423,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths.

Youth working with Groundwork Lawrence get involved with monitoring water quality in their own backyards.

cleaning our water

From dirty wells to sewer overflows to mercury in fish, pollution in our drinking water and our water resources unevenly affects minority, low income and other at risk residents. From northern Maine to suburban Connecticut, urban rivers carry more than their share of pollution.

Cleaning the Mystic River

Due to an announcement in 2008 that the Mystic River watershed received a 'D' for water quality, EPA and many organizations and government groups with an interest in the river came together to work on a coordinated approach to cleaning the polluted waterway. The Mystic River Watershed Initiative Steering Committee first met in March 2009 with federal, state, and local participants exchanging information and establishing goals for the watershed. Members of a Water Quality Science Committee have met as well to share monitoring and scientific findings. EPA New England is working to ensure that the principles of environmental justice remain a focus of the committee's actions and goals.

Volunteers in Lawrence, Mass.

Youth from the Lawrence area in 2006 sampled the Shawsheen, Spicket, and Merrimack rivers using equipment from EPA New England's new volunteer monitoring equipment loan program. The data collected by youth from the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team helped EPA determine pollution levels in the community's rivers, which led to improved water quality and human health.

The Metropolitan District Commission in Hartford, Conn.

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) in Hartford, Conn.: agreed in 2006 to control sanitary sewer overflows into the Connecticut River and its tributaries, and to pay a $850,000 penalty for past discharge violations. In the five years before that, the MDC discharged approximately 120 million gallons of untreated sewage from eight unpermitted overflow points in the Hartford area. The MDC is also working with the Conn. Department of Environmental Protection to reduce overflows from the "combined" portions of their wastewater collection system, which convey both sewage and storm water.

Brockton, Mass.

Brockton, Mass. agreed in 2006 to invest $86 million to improve its sewage treatment and collection system and pay a $120,000 fine for violating its discharge limits for phosphorous, chlorine, fecal coliform and ammonia. The city also agreed to spend $180,000 to assess water quality in the Salisbury Plain River after the treatment plant gets upgraded: to investigate regional alternatives for wastewater treatment, and to put in place a pilot program testing for lead in drinking water at local public schools.

In addition to wasting fuel, emitting greenhouse gases and degrading air quality, unnecessary engine idling can burn up to a gallon of fuel per hour

enforcing the law

Since the same laws apply to companies and people across New England, these laws should be enforced and applied equally. EPA's enforcement program strives to ensure all companies are held accountable, regardless of where they are located. Enforcement of these regulations can go a long way towards creating a cleaner environment.

Allied Waste Inc.

Allied Waste Inc., a waste disposal company based in Phoenix, Ariz., agreed to pay a $195,000 penalty for illegal idling in various inner city locations, including Brockton, Fall River and Quincy. These Allied Waste inspections were among 75 diesel idling violations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island done in 2008 by EPA New England. Many of the inspections were in areas of high concern, including Worcester, Providence, Pawtucket, Johnston and Boston.

Capitol Waste Services

This eastern Massachusetts waste hauler paid a $107,300 penalty to EPA for exceeding state idling limits in a lot near a residential area in Revere. EPA's effort to enforce idling laws includes technical assistance to help fleet operators find alternatives to idling. In addition to wasting fuel, emitting greenhouse gases and degrading air quality, unnecessary engine idling can burn up to a gallon of fuel per hour and create significantly more wear and tear on an engine than driving.

Lead abatement in Boston

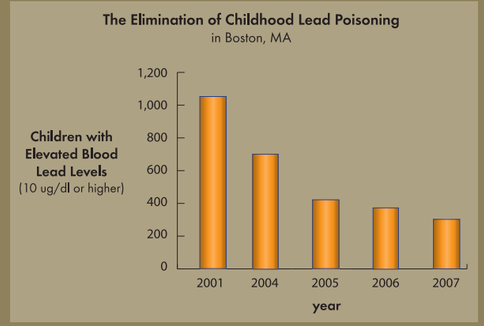
Mayo Group Development of Boston agreed to pay a $28,301 penalty and spend $152,420 to replace 157 windows in two buildings in Lynn, Mass., for failing to provide renters with information about the presence of lead in the housing. Mayo Group and its affiliates develop, own and manage apartment buildings in Massachusetts. Federal law requires landlords, property managers and realtors to provide information about lead-based paint and to notify tenants and purchasers that their homes may contain dangerous amounts of lead. Mayo Group is among the landlords and managers in violation who has been ordered to pay penalties and remove the lead threat. In 2008, EPA New England ordered violators to provide $600,000 in window replacements and abatement projects, thus reducing the risks of lead poisoning for pregnant women and children.

Cleaner trains in Boston

The 55 commuter trains that serve the Greater Boston area have been using cleaner low sulfur diesel fuel since 2004, as a result of two enforcement settlements completed by EPA New England. Some trains run through Dorchester and Chinatown, two of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. These areas have high asthma rates and bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences. As a result of the settlements, 76 fewer tons of particulate matter and 687 fewer tons of sulfur dioxide were emitted into the air over a 3-year period.

Working together reduces lead poisoning in Boston

The reduction of elevated blood lead levels in Boston children from 1,123 cases in 2001 to 362 cases in 2007 was the result of many people and organizations in both government and the private sector working together for a common purpose and resulted in one neighborhood with zero lead-poisoned children.



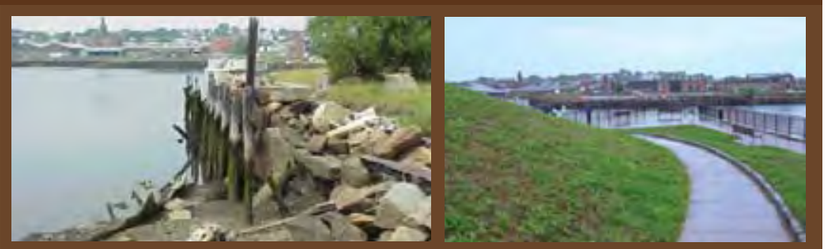
Childhood lead poisoning is one of the most serious environmental health problems in New England, especially in low-income, diverse environmental justice areas. In Boston, childhood lead poisoning disproportionately affects the lowest income, most diverse communities. Although the overall trend in lead poisoning has decreased, certain areas of the city have not experienced such success.

The Lead Action Collaborative Boston Blueprint to End Childhood Lead Poisoning targets communities in Boston that are burdened with the highest concentrations of elevated blood lead levels in children under 7. An elevated blood level is defined as a person having more than 10 micrograms per deciliter (>10ug/dl). More than 60 percent of the population in these target neighborhoods is African American, Caribbean American, Latino or Asian/Pacific Islander. The communities live in Boston's poorest neighborhoods, demonstrating a direct correlation between lead poisoning rates and poverty levels.

Since the Boston Blueprint was created and began working with the Urban Environmental Program in 2001, elevated blood lead levels in Boston children have dropped significantly. The project has also produced its first neighborhood with zero lead-poisoned children—the Fenway neighborhood.

Urban program makes a difference for city dwellers

New England's largest cities are home to the greatest number of residents facing a disproportionate share of health risks from environmental threats. City dwellers – especially children and older residents - live with daily health hazards from toxics, heavy metals, poor air quality inside and outside, traffic, and limited open and green space. EPA New England's Urban Environmental Program, formed in 1995, is the only EPA regional program in the country dedicated to urban environments. It was created to address urban environmental problems by directly involving members of the community. Since then, staff members in this program have been listening to communities' environmental concerns, identifying projects that respond to these concerns and providing the funding, guidance and expertise needed to address the public health problems most important to urban residents.



The Condor Street Urban Wild in Chelsea, Mass before and after redevelopment. This former marine industrial site has been redeveloped into an urban wild.

working together for healthy communities

No government agency alone can solve a community's pollution problems. Community members and local officials must be involved as well. Our EJ program operates with the premise that residents must get the education, knowledge and access necessary so they can make a difference in their own environments.

Brownfields Head Start in Somerville, Mass.

A 5,265-square-foot Brownfields property was cleaned and redeveloped by the community to house Somerville's Head Start program, thanks in part to EPA funding and collaborations with federal, state and local governments and community partners. Residents wanted to remove contamination and redevelop this Brownfields site in Somerville, where 12.5 percent of residents live below the poverty line, exceeding the state average by 25 percent. Thirty-five percent of the residents in this area, part of a state-designated Environmental Justice Zone, speak a language other than English. An EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant of $350,000 allowed the Community Action Agency of Somerville to buy the property and assess cleanup costs. Another $200,000 Brownsfields grant in 2003 and a $500,000 Brownfields revolving loan in 2004 paid for the cleanup. Head Start and the city of Somerville also paid for cleanup and other federal agencies and private sources helped pay for construction.

Conn. students monitor their environment

High school students in New Haven, Conn., working with the non-profit New Haven Ecology Project, researched local environmental problems, monitored air and water quality and presented results to residents and policymakers. The project was funded with $25,000 from EPA's EJ Small Grants program. Students gathered air quality data from six sites and water quality data from seven sites in the West River watershed. Final slide presentations to other students, community members, policymakers, academics and advocates incorporated data they had collected. Students also aired their presentation on the local public access channel.

Bridgeport Cares

Bridgeport CARE, a community project educating residents about environmental risks, identified nearly 40 environmental and health concerns, including exposure to toxic pollution, increased asthma rates, diesel truck idling and antiquated zoning laws that allow heavy industry near homes. Bridgeport CARE, a program of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice funded by EPA, worked with residents and private, government and non-profit partners to set priorities for reducing pollution and to devise ways to address it. Bridgeport's poverty rate is more than double Connecticut's rate. Bridgeport CARE held meetings between residents and industry representatives to negotiate improvements. The meetings led to directives to truckers and facilities to reduce dust and noise, and to follow a three-minute idling rule.

The Bridgeport CARE program works with the community to address environmental problems like the polluted Johnson Creek.

eliminating toxics

Whether inside schools, on playing fields or on the window sills, toxics present a threat to the health of teachers, students and other residents. And in certain neighborhoods, residents are much more likely to be exposed to toxics.

Educating refugees in Maine

The United Somali Women of Maine, a local non-profit, received $20,000 from EPA's EJ Small Grant Program to educate refugees in the Lewiston/Auburn area of central Maine on lead hazards, the risks of pesticide application, and basic life skills that would help them to keep their homes clean and healthy. The "New Mainers Lead and Pesticides Prevention Program" aims to reduce lead and pesticide hazards in homes and teach the community to improve the environments of their own homes.

A model nail salon in Springfield

A model nail salon meant to reduce serious health risks for hundreds of Vietnamese workers exposed to toxic chemicals was created with a $100,000 EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving cooperative agreement. A local vocational school used the money to build a nail salon that safely manages chemicals and that can be used to train Vietnamese employees of nail salons. Half of the estimated 300 salons in and around Springfield are owned by Vietnamese residents, providing a main source of jobs for low-income Vietnamese women.

Fall River dance studio

EPA ordered a Fall River, Mass., dance studio to postpone its classes after lead paint contamination was found in the studio building. Samples of paint showed high lead levels of lead in dust caused by recent sandblasting. With help from the building owner, the studio remained closed until the threat was removed. The facility was made safe for children and reopened a few months later.

High schools in Quincy and Randolph, Mass.

Exposure to dangerous chemicals for students, teachers and staff in Quincy and Randolph high schools was greatly reduced after EPA employees audited the schools and helped identify problem areas, collected unneeded chemicals, created a chemical inventory, and put in place a new chemical management system. The "pharmacy system" creates a centralized location where all laboratory chemicals at the school are properly stored, secured, inventoried and controlled. It is the sole location where qualified teachers may prepare solutions and mixtures as needed for classroom laboratory applications. The "pharmacy" itself must be adequately designed and equipped for safety, security, ventilation, lighting and emergency communication. EPA has also provided training for science teachers on chemical safety, hazardous waste management, pollution prevention and Green Chemistry.

A model nail salon in Springfield, Mass. sets an example for how nail salons can manage chemicals safely.

Less TCE in Providence, RI

Some 19,000 pounds a year of TCE, a hazardous cleaning solvent used by metal finishers, was eliminated from use in Providence after EPA technical staff ran a hands-on cleaning workshop exploring alternative cleaning methods to 12 companies using TCE. This was a reduction of 75 percent of the total reported TCE use, going from 26,000 pounds per year to less than 7,000 pounds per year. Due to the success of this project, EPA and its partners are exploring opportunities to extend this work to other states.

Safer auto body shops

EPA New England has conducted several workshops for auto body shops, vocational schools, and state compliance assistance staff to control and reduce emissions of air pollutants from auto body shops, which, as a group make up one of the most widely-distributed sources of air emissions in New England. EPA, working with states, has lists of about 5,200 auto body facilities in the region and where they are located. Using this data, EPA has created Geographic Information System maps to see if these shops are in locations with high asthma rates or high cancer health risks. EPA's first priority is to get shops to know and follow the law, particularly in areas where higher public health risks and potential EJ concerns exist.

Indoor air pollution in Lowell

Residents in four low-income, mostly minority neighborhoods, learned how to address indoor air pollution and solid waste disposal using a $100,000 environmental justice grant from EPA to the Coalition for a Better Acre in Lowell. The grant funded 12 educational sessions introducing natural, nontoxic cleaning products and asthma-reducing products to residents. The group also planned eight information sessions on recycling.

Safer cleaning products

Rhode Island Legal Services is working with youth from the Hartford Park Public Housing Project in Providence to create videos about the health hazards of common household cleaning products. Fifteen students were chosen to be in the "Green Teenz Video Learning Project," which will create two 30-second public service announcement videos about the health risks of some household cleaning products, and another 5-minute video on the correlation between solid waste and trash and poor living and health conditions in low-income neighborhoods. Rhode Island Legal Services, the state's primary legal advocate for low-income people, received $20,000 from EPA's EJ Small Grant Program for this project.

Auto body shops learn how to reduce emissions of air pollutants.

Public and private work as a team

Participants work for common goals at the Mystic River Summit in Boston, Mass.

EPA New England works with many public and private partners to create fairer environmental policy and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources to address environmental burdens in the region. The agency works with all six New England states to ensure they are committed to this goal. EPA has led EJ training for state staff, and recently held an EJ partnership meeting so representatives from all six states could exchange views on productive areas for future collaboration. Strong partnerships among states are critical for getting communities involved in ways that go beyond the reach of the federal government.

EPA New England holds meetings throughout the region to engage members of the community and local governments. At these meetings, citizens and officials talk about environmental and public health issues important on the local level and identify ways EPA might help, whether through grants, technical assistance or some other vehicle. EPA staff must have regular, sustained contact with people in the community if staff members are to stay aware of specific environmental problems. Meetings and other important information will be listed on EPA New England's environmental justice page, www.epa.gov/region1/ej

Science works for environmental justice

EPA New England's laboratory in Chelmsford, Mass., helps EPA's efforts to achieve environmental justice. Over the last few years, the laboratory, also known as the Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation, has devoted increasing resources to its work in EJ areas. The lab's involvement began in 2004 with a first-of-its-kind conference on environmental justice science and research co-sponsored by EPA and Boston University (BU). Community activists, academics, and environmental scientists there discussed the need for scientific support on environmental issues facing disadvantaged communities. EPA's New England lab employees responded by teaming up with communities to conduct research and do projects designed to address problems plaguing disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Lead safe yards

The regional laboratory gained experience working on environmental justice issues by conducting sampling and analysis of residential soil in the Boston-based Lead Safe Yard program. Between 1998 and 2002, nearly 100 house lots in North Dorchester and Roxbury received lead-safe yard improvements. Improvements included removing contaminated soil and adding mulch to raise the level of the ground on which children play; adding compost to garden plots from which previously contaminated soil had been removed; improving bare soil areas with lawns, mulch, and stepping stone paths; and creating gravel driveways. Employees for the EPA regional laboratory were intimately involved in the project, collecting and analyzing soil samples to help determine those methods which most effectively eliminated likely exposures of children playing in the yard.

Water monitoring loan program

In an effort to empower communities with the monitoring information necessary to tackle local water quality pollution, the EPA regional laboratory developed the nation's first water monitoring equipment loan program. Under this program, EPA New England loans community volunteer organizations equipment used in monitoring water flow, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, plankton, macroinvertebrate and habitat monitoring, and GPS locations. The resulting data allows volunteers and partnering agencies to identify water quality problems, develop strategies to address those problems, and measure the success of those strategies.

Contamination in community gardens

Laboratory staff members recently were recognized by the Boston Natural Areas Network for their support of a project researching contamination at urban public gardens. EPA's laboratory worked with BU and community groups to identify chemical hazards in inner city vegetable gardens. The laboratory built on this effort by mapping the distribution of PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) and toxic metals (arsenic, chromium, and copper) that have leached from timbers used in the gardens. This information helped the community replace contaminated soils, a concern identified at EPA's 2004 Science of Environmental Justice conference.

Disputes are solved another way

Participants learn to resolve disputes at ADR Training in Mansfield, Mass.

EPA New England's ADR Program is nationally recognized as a leader in promoting the effective use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in the environmental context. Since the early 90s, the regional ADR Program has helped parties resolve environmental conflicts with assistance from neutral facilitators and mediators.

EPA New England and its EJ Office hosted a workshop in Mansfield, Mass., in the fall of 2007 on how to use federal environmental laws to solve problems without litigation. The workshop, which drew 30 environmental justice community organizations and grassroots groups from all six New England states, trained participants from New England grassroots organizations on uses of alternative dispute resolution. Participants said their communities face issues ranging from air pollution, transportation problems (e.g., diesel buses, ozone, and particulate matter), asthma rates and water and land pollution to contamination at landfills and other sites. Since collaborating on this training, EPA New England's ADR and EJ programs are working more closely together to be a resource for communities in the region.

EJ is part of everyone's job at EPA New England

All employees will work towards a cleaner and healthier environment for all people.

EPA believes environmental justice concerns inherently touch every program of the agency. EPA New England's approach has been a national model since regional administrators here first began addressing the problems of environmental inequity.

During the 1980s, community groups in New England expressed concern that some racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups were suffering a disproportionate share of environmental burdens. EPA New England responded by forming an Environmental Equity Council and issuing the first Environmental Equity Policy in the nation in 1993. In October 2001, EPA New England reaffirmed its commitment to this issue with a revised EJ policy that directed the agency to incorporate EJ considerations into every program, and provided guidelines on how to do that. The policy can be found at: www.epa.gov/region1/ej/ejpolicy.html. The action plan created by this policy was the first of its kind in the country.

Today, EPA New England's EJ Council, which meets monthly, is charged with putting the policy into practice so that all employees will work towards a cleaner and healthier environment for all people. The Council is chaired by the director of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and is made up of the regional EJ coordinator, deputy office directors and staff from each of the six program and administrative offices in the region.

Training EPA New England staff on environmental justice is central to carrying out the policy. It ensures that all staff members are familiar with the laws and policies behind environmental justice and with case studies in New England that illustrate real world issues and accomplishments. About 95 percent of EPA New England employees had been trained as of mid-2008.

To ensure staff continuous learning, EPA New England hosts an environmental justice "Lunch and Learn" series of lectures by policy makers, academic professionals, researchers and others who have made major contributions to the field of environmental justice. These professionals share their knowledge and experiences, giving employees valuable information on EJ successes and providing helpful connections between EPA staff and external partners.

funding for communities

Grant Program	Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Award Amount	Website
Brownfields Grants	To provide funding for communities & other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together to assess, safely cleanup, and sustainable reuse Brownfields.	States, cities, towns, counties, U.S. Territories, Indian tribes and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.	Between 200K-1M depending on type of grant.	www.epa.gov/brownfields/pilot.htm
Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)	To provide support to help communities form collaborative partnerships, develop a comprehensive understanding of many sources of risk from toxics and environmental pollutants, set priorities and identify and carry out projects to reduce risks through collaborative action at the local level.	Local, public nonprofit organizations, Federally-recognized tribal governments, Native American organizations, private nonprofit organizations, quasi-public nonprofit organizations (both interstate and intrastate), local governments, colleges and universities.	Two funding levels: Level 1: $75,000-$100,000 Level 2: $150,000-300,000	www.epa.gov/care/
Environmental Education (EE)	To provide financial support for projects which design, demonstrate or disseminate environmental education practices, methods or techniques.	Local, tribal or state education agencies, colleges & universities, nonprofit organizations, state environmental agencies, & non-commercial educational broadcasting agencies.	$4,000-$50,000	www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html
Environmental Justice (EJ) Small Grants	To provide financial assistance to eligible community groups & nonprofit tribal organizations to work on projects that address environmental justice issues.	501(c)(3) non-profits; certain other non-profits; cities, townships, or county govts.; federally recognized Native American tribal govts. Eligible applicant must demonstrate it has worked directly with, or provided services to, the affected community.	$20,000	www.epa.gov/oecaerth/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-smgrants.html

Grant Program	Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Award Amount	Website
Healthy Communities Grant Program	To work directly with communities to reduce environmental risks to protect and improve human health and the quality of life.	State and local governments, public nonprofit institutions/organizations, private nonprofit institutions/organizations, quasi-public nonprofit institutions/organizations, Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments, K-12 schools or school districts; and non-profit organizations (e.g. grassroots and/or community-based organizations). Funding will be considered for a college or university to support a project with substantial community and/or tribal involvement.	$5,000 - $35,000	www.epa.gov/region1/eco/uep/hcgp.html
Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Control	Established under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act, these funds are for the implementation of state nonpoint source pollution control programs. Each state "passes through" a portion of these funds to other entities for implementing specific nonpoint source pollution management practices.	Public and private entities including nonprofits, local state governments, tribes, special districts, educational institutions, and government agencies. State WQ agencies distribute the applications.	Variable. Past awards range from $20,000 to $300,000	www.epa.gov/owow/nps/cwact.html

Grant Program	Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Award Amount	Website
Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP)	To provide funds for research, education, and demonstration to reduce risk and use of pesticides, in both agricultural and non-agricultural settings. To provide funds for research, education, and demonstration to reduce risk and use of pesticides, in both agricultural and non-agricultural settings.	States, Territories, Federally-recognized tribes and any agency or instrumentality of a State including state universities and some commodities groups.	Usually up to $47,000 per project.	www.epa.gov/oppbppd1/pesp/regional_grants.htm
Pollution Prevention Incentives (PPIS) for States/Tribes	To build and support state pollution prevention (P2) capabilities and to test, at the state level, innovative pollution prevention approaches and methodologies.	State agencies, federally-recognized tribes, Territories and possessions. States are encouraged to form partnerships with other P2 providers.	Up to $200,000 per grant.	www.epa.gov/oppt/p2home/pubs/grants/ppis/ppis.htm
Source Reduction Assistance	To support source reduction and/or pollution prevention projects that will provide an overall benefit to the environment by preventing pollutants at the source.	States, U.S. territories, federally-recognized tribes, local governments, independent school district governments, state-controlled institutions of higher education, non-profits having a 501(c)(3) status, and private institutions of higher education.	Typically $25,000-$75,000	www.epa.gov/oppt/p2home/pubs/grants

Grant Program	Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Award Amount	Website
Northeast Diesel Collaborative Emissions Reduction Program	To support diesel emissions reduction projects in EPA Regions 1 and 2, which include the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont - including tribal lands belonging to the federally-recognized tribes in these regions, or the territory of the US Virgin Islands, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.	A regional, State, local or tribal agency or port authority with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality; and a non-profit organization or institution that – 1) represents or provides pollution reduction or educational services to persons or organizations that own or operate diesel fleets; or 2) has, as its principal purpose, the promotion of transportation or air quality. School districts, municipalities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), cities and counties are all eligible entities under this assistance agreement program within the extent that they fall within the definition above.	Typically $100,000 to $500,000	www.northeastdiesel.org/funding.htm#funding
Superfund Technical Assistance Grants (TAGS)	To enable communities affected by a site on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) to obtain technical assistance in interpreting information regarding the site.	Groups must be located near or affected by a site that is either proposed for or on the National Priorities List. Groups must incorporate as nonprofit organizations.	Up to $50,000 initially; in the case of complex sites, additional funds may be available.	www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tag

funding for communities (cont'd)

Grant Program	Purpose	Eligible Applicants	Award Amount	Website
Targeted Grants to Reduce Childhood Lead Poisoning	To conduct activities designed to reduce incidences of childhood lead poisoning in venerable populations.	State, local governments, US commonwealth and territorial governments; federally-recognized tribes and tribal consortia, non-profit organizations, private and state-controlled institutions of higher learning and non-profit organizations having 501(c)(3) status.	$25,000-$100,000	www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/grantmap.htm
Wetlands Protection Grants	To assist state, tribal & local government wetlands protection efforts under Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act.. Funds can be used to develop new wetlands protection programs or refine existing protection programs. Funds cannot be used to fund operational support of wetland programs.	State and tribal agencies, local governments, and conservation districts.	Varies.	www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines

tools & resources

Environmental Justice Materials		
Environmental Justice Small Grants: Emerging Tools for Local Problem-Solving – a snapshot of 71 small grants awarded	www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/grants/ej_smgrants_emerging_tools_2nd_edition.pdf	Contact: EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, (800) 962-6215
EPA's Environmental Justice Biennial Reports and Project Reports	www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/ej-annual-project-reports.html	Contact: EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, (800) 962-6215
A Citizen's Guide to Using Federal Environmental Laws to Secure Environmental Justice	To purchase a copy, visit www.elistore.org/	
Environmental Justice: The Power of Partnerships -- The Collaborative Problem-Solving Model at Work in Spartanburg, South Carolina (A DVD Documentary)	To obtain a copy, visit www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/ejcps-dvd.html	Contact: EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, (800) 962-6215
Communities and Environmental Laws (DVD)	To order a copy, call (800) 490-9198 or go to www.epa.gov/ncepi/ordering.htm (Search for EPA Publication #300-C-04-001)	
Working With Lawyers: A Guide for Community Residents and Environmental Justice Activists	To download or order a free copy in English or Spanish, visit: www.elistore.org	
Community Guide to EPA's Voluntary Programs	www.epa.gov/care/library/guide_vol_progs_2008.pdf	

Grant and Funding Tools

Grants.gov—find and apply for federal government grants.	www.grants.gov	Grants.gov Contact Center: (800) 518-4726
U.S. EPA Grants—funding opportunities, information on how to apply, new recipient training, and more.	www.epa.gov/ogd/	Grants and Interagency Agreements Program: (202) 564-5315
Grants & Funding in New England	www.epa.gov/region1/grants/index.html	
Environmental Justice Grants	www.epa.gov/oecaerth/environmentaljustice/grants	

Toxics and Hazardous Waste Resources

Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC)—a program to provide educational and technical assistance to communities affected by hazardous waste sites regulated by the Superfund and Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) programs.	www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tasc
EPA's Toxics Release Inventory—information on toxic chemical releases and waste management activities reported annually by certain industries	www.epa.gov/tri
EPA's Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program—working to clean up and redevelop potentially contaminated lands, making it easier for such lands to become vital, functioning parts of their communities.	www.epa.gov/brownfields

Air Quality Resources

Environmental Justice Resources from EPA's Office of Air and Radiation	www.epa.gov/air/ej
Strategies for Addressing Asthma within a Coordinated School Health Program	www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Asthma/strategies.htm
Managing Asthma in the School Environment	www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/managingasthma.html
Resources for Addressing Asthma in Schools	www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Asthma/pdf/pubs-links.pdf
Collision Repair Campaign—a campaign to address health threats by drastically reducing auto body emissions at the national level.	www.epa.gov/collisionrepair
Community-Based Air Toxics Projects—descriptions of community-based air toxics projects designed to assess and address health and environmental issues at the local level.	www.epa.gov/air/toxicair/community
Improving Air Quality in Your Community—activities for reducing both indoor and outdoor pollution, information about costs, and how local communities can apply for EPA grants to kick-start their activities.	www.epa.gov/air/community

tools & resources (cont'd)

Pesticide Resources

Using Pesticides Safely—fact sheets for consumers	www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/safely.htm
Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety	www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/Cit_Guide/citguide.pdf
National Pesticide Information Center—objective, science-based information about pesticides and pesticide-related topics	www.npic.orst.edu

In Your Home

The Inside Story: A Guide to Indoor Air Quality	www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/insidest.html
A Citizen's Guide to Radon: The Guide to Protecting Yourself and Your Family from Radon	www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html (English and Spanish)
Lead in Your Home: A Parent's Reference Guide	www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadrev.pdf
Testing Your Home for Lead	www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadtest.pdf

Environmental Enforcement

Report environmental violations or spills	www.epa.gov/epahome/violations.htm	(800) 300-2193
Report a Violation of Lead Paint Rules in New England	www.epa.gov/region1/enforcement/leadpaint/reportviolations.html	

Other Resources

From exposure to illness: Community Health Studies and Environmental Contamination — sharing the experience and perspective of public health staff who study links between environmental exposure to chemicals and health effects.	www.communityhealthstudies.com
Citizens Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) —a guide that explains NEPA, how it is implemented, and how people outside the federal government can better participate in environmental impact assessments.	www.nepa.gov/nepa/Citizens_Guide_Dec07.pdf

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VT Department of Environmental Conservation
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links to EPA New England web sites

Air
www.epa.gov/ne/topics/index.html#air

Brownfields
www.epa.gov/region1/brownfields

Environmental Justice
www.epa.gov/region1/ej/

Lead-Based Paint
www.epa.gov/ne/enforcement/leadpaint

Lead Hazards
www.epa.gov/ne/topics/pollutants/lead.html

Mercury
www.epa.gov/mercury/advisories.htm

Pest Management
www.epa.gov/NE/eco/pest/grants.html

Rivers
www.epa.gov/region01/topics/water/water-sheds.html

Smoke-Free Homes
www.epa.gov/smokefree

Urban Environmental Program
www.epa.gov/region01/eco/uep

External links disclaimer

This brochure provides links to non-EPA web sites that contain information that may be useful and are consistent with the purpose of this document. References in these web sites to any specific commercial product, process, service, manufacturer or company does not constitute its endorsement or recommendation by EPA. EPA is not responsible for the content or non-EPA web sites, and cannot attest to their accuracy.

Community education and involvement is key to creating cleaner, healthier neighborhoods.

"Our goal is to engage youth who live in public housing and who have very little opportunity to participate."

--Steven Fischbach
Rhode Island Legal Services

"We are just small-town people trying to help our city come back to life..."

--Patricia Moss
Groundwork Springfield

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA 901-F-09-024
April 2009